

## Protocol for Managing Vacancies in Group Living Arrangements

**Purpose:** The goal of this protocol is to provide guidance to BDS staff and Provider agencies as to the expectations and limits that must be recognized relative to the use and funding of vacancies in group living arrangements. This protocol is developed with the understanding by BDS that the movement of one person does not necessarily or immediately result in a reduction in the need for staff support or funding. It must also be understood by the Provider community that BDS cannot continue to fund a level of support that is not being utilized to its limit. *It is with this recognition, and in this context, that those involved must work in a collaborative manner to assure that all resources, both financial and supportive, be utilized to the fullest extent possible.*

- When a vacancy is anticipated, both BDS and the Provider will make efforts to plan for the filling of the vacancy as soon as it becomes available, i.e. no unreimbursed or rate-adjusted days.
- When this is not possible, BDS will consider making rate adjustments for those remaining in the residence to cover the ongoing staffing needs when, in BDS's judgement, the vacancy can be utilized to support someone in need within a short period of time. Such adjustments will be made for a period not to exceed 60 days.
- During the period of the rate adjustment **BDS** will:
  - Provide appropriate referrals, if available. Referrals will be made to the Provider from the local Regional Office within the first 15 days. If, after 15 days no one is identified to move into the vacancy, referrals will be sought from other offices throughout the state. It is the responsibility of the local office to inform other Regional Offices of the existing vacancy and encourage referrals.
  - Assure that information reasonably requested by the Provider is made available in a timely manner.
  - Work with the Provider to make allowance for any accommodations necessary to meet an individual's needs. Allowances may include staffing adjustments and/or physical adaptations or modifications.
- During the period of rate adjustment the **Provider** must:
  - Reduce staffing levels and costs in any way that will not have a detrimental effect on the services and support to those living in the residence with the vacancy.
  - Clearly communicate its information requirements and any questions or concerns that arise during the referral process to BDS.
  - Accept and give serious consideration to all referrals.
  - Respond to referrals in a timely manner.
- In the event no one is identified to utilize the vacancy within 60 days, BDS and the Provider will 1) renegotiate the terms and conditions under which the residence will continue to operate at a reduced rate, or 2) plan for the closure of the residence and consolidation of resources.